IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend allowable dependent claim 25 to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 21, and cancel claims 21-24 without prejudice, as shown in the following listing of claims, which replaces all previous listings and versions of claims.

1. (previously presented) An outboard motor comprising:

an engine; and

a cover structure defining an engine room in which the engine is installed, the cover structure comprising a top cover defining an upper part of the engine room and an under cover defining a lower part of the engine room, the top cover and the under cover being detachably connected together along horizontal edges thereof, the under cover comprising

a pair of right and left cover members detachably connected together along opposing vertical edges thereof;

an opening formed in at least one of the cover members for allowing access therethrough to the engine installed in the engine room, the opening being vertically spaced from the horizontal edge of the under cover and extending contiguously from the vertical edge of the at least one cover member; and

a lid made of elastic material and attached to an outer surface of the under cover so as to close the opening of the under cover, the lid having a first part which covers the opening of the under cover, and a second part integral with the first part and removably connected to the under cover, the first part being elastically bendable relative to the second part so as to open and close the opening of the under cover.

2. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 1, wherein the engine is disposed with a crankshaft disposed vertically and a cylinder disposed horizontally, the engine having a removable spark plug unit associated with the cylinder, the spark plug unit being disposed opposite to the opening of the under cover.

3. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 1, wherein the cover members of the under cover are formed of a synthetic resin material.

4. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 1, wherein each of the cover members has a cutout recess formed at the vertical edge thereof and forming, together with the cutout recess of the other cover member, the opening of the under cover.

5. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 1, wherein the cover members are connected together by a plurality of joint portions arranged at intervals along the vertical edges of the cover members, each of the joint portions being composed of a first engagement lug projecting horizontally from the vertical edge of one of the cover members, a second engagement lug projecting horizontally from the vertical edge of the other cover member, the first and second engagement lugs being fitted with each other in a front-and-rear direction of the under cover so as to form a half lap joint, and a screw fastener threaded into the first and second engagement lugs to join them together, the joint portions including a first joint portion disposed between the horizontal edge of the under cover and the opening, and a second joint portion disposed below the opening.

6. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 5, wherein the first and second engagement lugs have sloped mating surfaces and are shaped into a reverse taper configuration.

7. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 5, wherein the cover members each have a reinforcement frame disposed on an inner surface thereof, the reinforcement frame including a first horizontal reinforcement

rib extending along an upper edge of each respective cover member, a plurality of vertical reinforcement ribs extending vertically downward from the first horizontal reinforcement rib, and a second horizontal reinforcement rib disposed immediately below the opening and extending from the vertical edge of each cover member to one of the vertical reinforcement ribs located near the vertical edge of the cover member, and wherein the first and second engagement lugs of the first joint portion are each formed integrally with the first horizontal reinforcement rib of a corresponding one of the cover members, and the first and second engagement lugs of the second joint portion are each formed integrally with the second horizontal reinforcement rib of a corresponding one of the cover members.

8. (currently amended) An outboard motor according to claim 7, wherein the cover members are formed from ~~of~~ a synthetic resin material, and the reinforcement frame is formed from a synthetic resin material and vibration-welded to each of the cover members.

9. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 7, wherein the reinforcement frame further includes a third horizontal reinforcement rib disposed below the second horizontal reinforcement rib and extending parallel

to the first horizontal reinforcement rib, the vertical reinforcement ribs extend between the first and third horizontal reinforcement ribs, the joint portions further include a third joint portion disposed below the second joint portion, and the first and second engagement lugs of the third joint portion are each formed integrally with the third horizontal reinforcement rib of a corresponding one of the cover members.

10. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 9, further comprising a mount case on which the engine is mounted, the mount case having a flange, wherein the third horizontal reinforcement rib has a longitudinal groove facing in a lateral inward direction of the under cover and receiving therein a peripheral edge of the flange of the mount case, the mount case forming a bottom wall of the engine room.

11.-14. (canceled).

15. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 1, wherein the lid further has a thin joint portion interconnecting the first part and the second part and serving as a hinge.

16. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to 1, wherein the first part has a seal portion elastically fitted in the opening of the under cover, and the second part has a plurality of locking projections removably fitted in a corresponding number of lid-mounting holes formed in the under cover.

17. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 16, wherein the seal portion has a groove snugly receiving therein at least part of a peripheral edge of the opening of the under cover.

18. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 16, wherein the lid further has a continuous seal lip extending around the seal portion and sealingly engaging the outer surface of the under cover.

19. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 18, wherein the first part of the lid further has a plurality of locking projections removably fitted in a corresponding number of lid-mounting holes formed in the under cover, the locking projections of the first part and the locking projections of the second part being arranged along a peripheral edge of the lid, the continuous seal lip being disposed inward of the locking projections and outward of the seal portion and extending along the peripheral edge of the lid without interference with the locking projections.

20. (previously presented) An outboard motor according to claim 1, wherein each of the cover members has a cutout recess formed at the vertical edge thereof and forming, together with the cutout recess of the other cover member, the opening of the under cover, and the second part of the lid extends over and along the vertical edges of the cover members.

21. - 24. (canceled).

25. (currently amended) ~~An outboard motor according to claim 21; wherein~~ An outboard motor comprising: an engine; and a cover structure defining an engine room in which the engine is disposed, the cover structure having an access opening therein for allowing access therethrough to the engine, and a lid for closing the access opening, the lid having one part removably connected to the cover structure and another part integral with the one part and elastically bendable relative to the one part between open and closed positions so as to open and close the access opening, and the one part of the lid ~~has~~ having a plurality of locking projections removably fitted in respective lid-mounting holes formed in the cover structure.